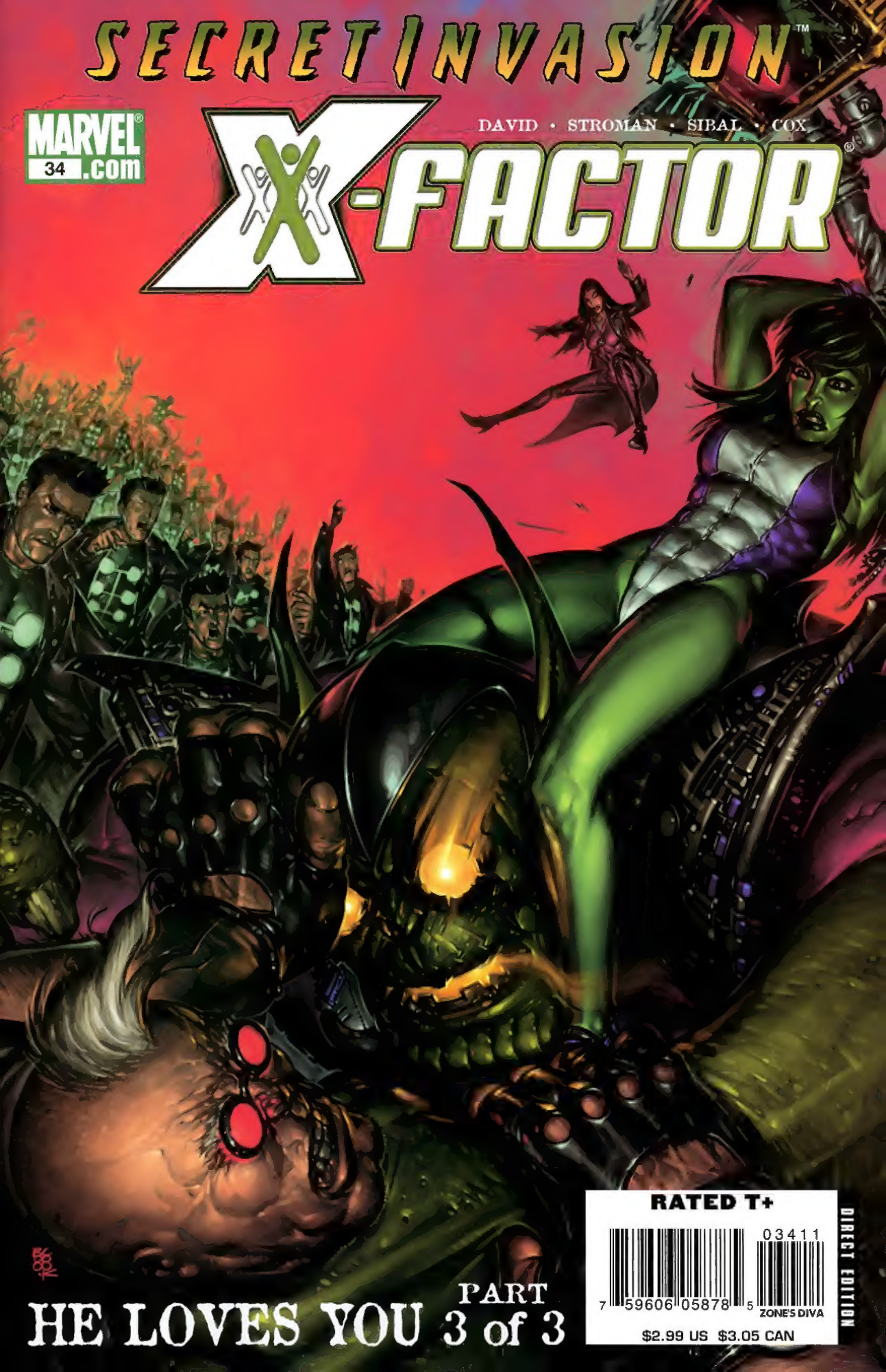
SECRET INVASION™
MARVEL
34
.com
DAVID • STROMAN • SIBAL • COX
X-FACTOR®
HE LOVES YOU
PART 3 of 3
RATED T+
03411
7 59606 05878 5
ZONE'S DIVA
DIRECT EDITION
$2.99 US $3.05 CAN

IN A SOCIETY WHERE MUTANTS AND FORMER MUTANTS ALIKE FEEL THREATENED BY THE WORLD AROUND THEM. THEY TURN TO THEIR FIRST, BEST LINE OF DEFENSE WHENEVER TROUBLE ARISES: X-FACTOR, THE PRIVATE DETECTIVE AGENCY FOUNDED BY MADROX, THE MULTIPLE MAN.

X-FACTOR

PREVIOUSLY...

HAVING RELOCATED TO DETROIT, X-FACTOR HAS BEEN HIRED BY DARWIN'S FATHER, WHO IS LOOKING FOR HIS MISSING SON. THE GOOD NEWS IS, THEY FOUND HIM, APPARENTLY IN THE COMPANY OF LONGSHOT. THE BAD NEWS IS, IT TURNS OUT LONGSHOT IS A SKRULL. AND NOT JUST ANY SKRULL: THE FORMIDABLE TALISMAN, THE SKRULL'S CONNECTION TO THEIR GODS. THE TALISMAN IS BEING SOUGHT BY SHE-HULK AND HER PARTNER, JAZINDA, IN THE HOPE THAT HE CAN BE USED TO WARD OFF THE SKRULL INVASION OF EARTH. BUT AS SO OFTEN HAPPENS, MISUNDERSTANDING HAS LED TO X-FACTOR GOING HEAD-TO-HEAD WITH SHE-HULK WHILE THE TALISMAN ATTEMPTS TO MAKE GOOD HIS ESCAPE.

IN OTHER NEWS, ARIEL IS BACK FROM THE DICK RITGER BOWLING CAMP IN UPSTATE NEW YORK, HAVING HONED HER SKILLS, AND SHE IS LOOKING AT COLLEGES. SHE'S AIMING FOR DELAWARE STATE SINCE SHE LIKES THEIR CURRICULUM, PLUS KIM TERRELL IS THE BOWLING COACH. AND CAROLINE GOT HER FIRST PASSPORT SO WE COULD ATTEND A CONVENTION IN TORONTO. WE TOLD HER SHE NEEDED TO HAVE A PASSPORT PHOTO TAKEN AND SHE SAID IN ANNOYANCE, "DON'T TAKE MY PICTURE. I LOOK HIDEOUS." FIVE YEARS OLD GOING ON EIGHTEEN.

X-FACTOR (ISSN #1932-5266) **No. 34, October, 2008**. Published Monthly by MARVEL PUBLISHING, INC., a subsidiary of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 417 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10016. **PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, NY AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES.** © 2008 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. $2.99 per copy in the U.S. and $3.05 in Canada (GST #R127032852) in the direct market and $3.99 per copy in the U.S. and $3.99 in Canada (GST #R127032852) through the newsstand; Canadian Agreement #40668537. **Printed in the USA.** Subscription rate (U.S. dollars) for 12 issues: U.S. $27.00; Canada $37.00; Foreign $39.00. **POSTMASTER: SEND ALL ADDRESS CHANGES TO X-FACTOR, C/O MARVEL SUBSCRIPTION DEPT., P.O. BOX 110, NEWBURGH, NY 12550. TELEPHONE # (800) 217-9158. FAX # (845) 457-5029. subscriptions@marvelsubs.com.** ALAN FINE, CEO Marvel Toys & Publishing Divisions and CMO of Marvel Characters, Inc.; DAVID GABRIEL, SVP of Publishing Sales & Circulation; DAVID BOGART, SVP of Business Affairs & Talent Management; MICHAEL PASCIULLO, VP Merchandising & Communications; JIM O'KEEFE, VP of Operations & Logistics; DAN CARR, Executive Director of Publishing Technology; JUSTIN F. GABRIE, Director of Editorial Operations; SUSAN CRESPI, Editorial Operations Manager; OMAR DTIEKU, Production Manager; STAN LEE, Chairman Emeritus. For information regarding advertising in Marvel Comics or on Marvel.com, please contact Mitch Dane, Advertising Director, at mdane@marvel.com. For Marvel subscription inquiries, please call 800-217-9158.

SO...MY SON IS CALLED "DARWIN"?
YES, BECAUSE OF HIS EVOLUTIONARY ABILITIES.
I UNDERSTAND THAT, BUT... DARWIN?
IT WAS EITHER THAT OR "SCOPES MONKEY BOY."
I'M SORRY... WHAT?
NEVER MIND.
WHEN I THINK OF ALL THE THINGS I SHOULD HAVE DONE FOR HIM, SIRYN. I'M THE WORLD'S WORST FATHER.
WERE YOU AN ARMS DEALER? EVER SELL ANYONE OUT?
UHM... NO.
GET YOURSELF KILLED?
OBVIOUSLY NOT, RICTOR.
FROM WHERE I'M SITTING, YOU'RE FATHER OF THE FREAKING YEAR. TRUST ME.

DETROIT.
SHE-HULK, BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I SYMPATHIZE WITH YOU.
I KNOW ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT WAS DONE TO YOU AND TO YOUR COUSIN.
DONE TO YOU BY PEOPLE YOU TRUSTED, DEPENDED ON.
YOU WERE AN AVENGER, A MEMBER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR... YOU WERE THE ULTIMATE INSIDER.
AND SUDDENLY, PRESTO, YOU'RE ON THE OUTSIDE LOOKING IN.
PLUS THEY MADE YOU INTO SOMETHING YOU NEVER WERE: A VICTIM.
ALL OF THAT COMBINES INTO A LOT OF REASON FOR DISPLACED ANGER.
LONG STORY SHORT: I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH.
SHORT STORY EVEN SHORTER, MADROX...

I DON'T GIVE A CRAP.

THE PROBLEM WITH TAKING ON SOMEONE LIKE SHE-HULK IS--AND I HATE TO ADMIT IT--THE WHOLE "SHE" PART TENDS TO MAKE YOU OVERLOOK THE "HULK" PART, AND YOU FORGET WHAT YOU'RE DEALING WITH.
MY DUPES YELP AS SHE SHAKES THEM OFF WITH THAT SAME WEIRD KIND OF SLAPPING NOISE THAT A DOG MAKES WHEN IT SHAKES OFF WATER.
MORE DUPES POP INTO EXISTENCE AS THEY LAND, BUT IT'S LIKE TRYING TO STOP A TIDAL WAVE WITH DIXIE CUPS.
UH-OH.
YOU BET YOUR BUTT, "UH-OH."
IMPACT CAUSES YOU TO REPLICATE. I GET THAT. TELL ME THIS:
IF I TEAR YOU IN HALF, DOES THAT COUNT AS AN IMPACT?
I'M *REALLY* HOPING THAT QUESTION'S RHETORICAL.
JAZINDA? YOU THERE?

C'MON, J. ANSWER.
I'M HERE, JENNIFER.
I WAS KNOCKED OUT WITH MY OWN WEAPON. I FIRED POINT BLANK AT NOGOR'S COMPANION AND THE BLAST JUST RICOCHETED OFF HIM AND HIT ME.
DID IT KILL YOU?
DON'T THINK SO. I'M NOT HUNGRY, AND DYING ALWAYS GIVES ME THE MUNCHIES.
I'M HEADING DUE EAST. I CAN SENSE NOGOR JUST A FEW BLOCKS AWAY.
I'LL CATCH YOU UP. DON'T LET THAT SKRULL GET AWAY.
SKRULL? WHO'S A SKRULL?
LONGSHOT! OKAY?
LONGSHOT'S A SKRULL? WEIRD. HE DOESN'T LOOK SKRULLISH.
YOU OKAY, GUIDO?
YEAH, AS OKAY AS A GUY WHO JUST GOT KICKED IN THE 'NADS BY SHE-HULK CAN BE.
GOOD. LET'S GO AFTER HER.
LUCKY ME, I'M A MASOCHIST.

THE DARWIN AWARDS PART 3

PETER DAVID — WRITER
LARRY STROMAN — PENCILER
JON SIBAL — INKER
JEROMY COX — COLORIST
VC'S CORY PETIT — LETTERER
WILL PANZO & AUBREY SITTERSON — EDITORS
JOE QUESADA — EDITOR IN CHIEF
DAN BUCKLEY — PUBLISHER

I...I THOUGHT YOU WERE MY FRIEND!
I TRUSTED YOU!
AND YOU WERE RIGHT TO DO SO.
NO MATTER HOW I APPEAR TO YOU, 'MANDO, I'M STILL THE SAME INSIDE...
G-GET AWAY FROM ME!
YOU'RE A SKRULL!
OOOOOF!
TRUE ENOUGH. I AM A SKRULL.
BUT I PRESENTED MYSELF TO YOU IN A WAY THAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO LISTEN TO ME.
WHY WOULD I LISTEN TO YOU? YOU'RE A SKRULL!

YES, WE'VE ESTABLISHED THAT. REPEATEDLY.
AND YOUR WORDS PROVE THE NECESSITY OF MY SUBTERFUGE.
A LIE, ADMITTEDLY. I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE CHARLES XAVIER IS.
AND YOU SAID YOU'D HELP ME FIND PROFESSOR XAVIER!
BUT WE DISCUSSED MANY OTHER THINGS IN OUR TIME TOGETHER.
I SAID THAT YOU HAD TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL, AND I MEANT IT.
MY BRETHREN HAVE THEORIZED THAT YOU EXISTED. IT IS THE GODS' WILL THAT I WAS THE ONE WHO FOUND YOU.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
ARMANDO...ON A GENETIC LEVEL, THERE IS NOT THAT VAST A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HUMANS AND SKRULLS. I BELIEVE THAT, FROM AN EVOLUTIONARY POINT OF VIEW...
...YOU ARE THE MISSING LINK.

...WHAT ELSE IS THE SKRULL ABILITY TO CHANGE OUR SHAPE IF NOT AN EVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT TO MAXIMIZE OUR SURVIVAL?
I...I GUESS.
THE ABILITY THAT [illegible] DEVELOPED IS TERRAN EQUIVALENT [illegible] SKRULLS [illegible]
IT SHOWS THAT, ON SOME LEVEL, THE [illegible] HAS THE POTENTIAL [illegible] POWERFUL
WHICH MAKES US DANGEROUS TO YOU.
ON THE CONTRARY. UPON SUCH COMMONALITY ARE GREAT ALLIANCES BUILT.
MANY OTHER RACES DO NOT TRUST US SPECIFICALLY BECAUSE OF OUR MALLEABILITY.
IF HUMANITY DISPLAYS THAT SAME TRAIT, YOU WILL RECEIVE THE SAME HOSTILE TREATMENT.
WE'VE ALREADY RECEIVED PLENTY OF HOSTILE TREATMENT, THANKS. AND WE'RE STILL HERE.
FOR THE [illegible] BEING, YES, YOUR LUCK WILL NOT LAST.
YOU HAVE ALIENS.

THEY NEED YOU TO CONQUER THEM? IS THAT THE ARGUMENT?
WE ARE NOT SPEAKING OF CONQUEST. THINK OF IT MORE AS STRATEGIC PROTECTIVE OCCUPATION.
HOW CONSIDERATE. AND WHILE YOU'RE PROTECTING THEM FROM EVERYONE ELSE, WHO'S PROTECTING THEM FROM YOU?
I'M WARNING YOU, YONDA KL'RT-SPA... THE LIVING HARNESS OF THE POWER OF THE GODS.
LOWER YOUR WEAPON AND SHOW PROPER RESPECT. IT IS YOUR ONLY CHANCE FOR SURVIVAL.
YOU CANNOT KILL ME.

I WOULD NOT HAVE THOUGHT, KL'RT-SPAWN, THAT YOU WOULD HAVE THE WISDOM TO BEHAVE IN SUCH A MANNER. TO SHOW PROPER DEFERENCE.
I'M NOT SHOWING PROPER DEFERENCE.
OH, REALLY? THEN WHAT WOULD YOU CALL IT?
GETTING OUT OF THE WAY.

UNHHHH!!!
THOM
CRAK

MONET!
IT'S NOT REALLY LONGSHOT! IT'S--
A SKRULL. GOT THE MEMO, MADROX.
YOU SHOULD HAVE HEARD THE LINE HE WAS LAYING ON DARWIN.

OUT OF THE WAY, ST. CROIX!
WHOA--!
ARRRHHH!!!
DON'T JUST... STAND THERE, PEOPLE--!
TAKE HIM!!!
TRUST US, HE'S TAKEN!

"TRUST." WHAT DO HUMANS KNOW OF TRUST?
YOU CAN'T. EVEN AGREE ON ONE GOD.
YOU NEED US TO TAKE CHARGE OF YOU. LEFT TO YOUR OWN DEVICES, YOU WOULD DESTROY EACH OTHER SOONER OR LATER.
WE COULD NOT MERELY STAND BY AND WATCH SUCH POTENTIAL, SUCH RAW MATERIAL, BE WASTED.
IT WOULD BE A SIN.
AND I, THE HIGHEST AND MOST SACRED TALISMAN OF THE SKRULL EMPIRE, KNOW QUITE A BIT ABOUT SIN.

THERE'S A SMELL IN THE AIR, LIKE BARBECUE, AND I ONLY REALIZE BELATEDLY THAT IT'S US.
WHAT THE HELL IS HE HITTING US WITH--?
IT'S CONVICTION.
HUH?
IT'S THE PURE CONVICTION OF HIS BELIEFS. HE TRUSTS IN THE GODS IMPLICITLY.
HE CAN DESTROY YOU BECAUSE HE BELIEVES HE CAN.
HOW DO WE TAKE HIM DOWN...?
BELIEVE IN SOMETHING MORE THAN HE DOES.
MONET? ARE...ARE YOU--?
ARMANDO!
ARMANDO... COME QUICKLY...
ARE YOU SERIOUS? YOU FLASH-FRY PEOPLE, YOU TALK ABOUT INVADING US FOR OUR OWN GOOD, AND YOU THINK I'M JUST GOING TO COME WITH YOU?

YOU TRUSTED ME WHEN I LOOKED LIKE THIS.
EVEN IN THIS FORM, I WAS TESTING YOUR ABILITIES, TRYING TO DETERMINE YOUR FULL POTENTIAL.
ARE YOU SO SHALLOW, ARMANDO, THAT YOU NEED TO DEPEND UPON EXTERIOR LOOKS?
WHAT IF I LOOKED LIKE THIS?
I SAW THE WAY YOU LOOKED AT THE CREATURE WITH THIS APPEARANCE. I CAN BE INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM HER, EVEN DOWN TO THE VOICE.
WOULD YOU FIND THIS PREFERABLE?
I CAN'T EVEN BEGIN TO TELL YOU HOW MUCH I WOULDN'T.
AND STOP CALLING ME ARMANDO. ONLY CLOSE FRIENDS GET TO CALL ME ARMANDO.
YOU CAN CALL ME--
--DARWIN!!!

VERY WELL, DARWIN.
IF YOU ARE DISINCLINED TO BE AN ALLY...
THEN YOU WILL PROVIDE A WORTHWHILE SUBJECT FOR DISSECTION.
DARWIN'S WHOLE THING IS THAT HE CAN SUPPOSEDLY EVOLVE TO SURVIVE ANY SITUATION.
BUT HE NEEDS TO DO MORE THAN SURVIVE HERE. HE NEEDS TO FIND A WAY TO PUT THIS GUY DOWN.
THE ENERGY CRACKLES AROUND HIM...BUT HE DOESN'T SEEM AT ALL HURT. HE SEEMS PARALYZED... OVERWHELMED...UNCERTAIN OF WHAT TO DO.
AND THE UNCERTAINTY IS COSTING.
HE NEEDS SOMETHING TO BELIEVE IN. HE NEEDS...
DARWIN.

YOU CAN TAKE THIS GUY.
HE'S ALL MOUTH. MOUTH WITH A LIGHT SHOW.
TAKE HIM DOWN. I KNOW YOU CAN.
HE'S TAKEN.
I DON'T KNOW HOW HE'S DOING IT. MAYBE HIS EVOLVING BODY IS ENABLING HIM TO JUST ABSORB THE ENERGY.
MAYBE HE'S JUST TOO DETERMINED TO QUIT.
ALL I KNOW IS THAT, FOR THE FIRST TIME...

...NOGOR LOOKS WORRIED.
STAY BACK, ARMANDO! I'M WARNING YOU--!
YOU CAN TAKE YOUR WARNING AND--
GOT'CHA!!!
UNNHHHH!!!

HEY! I HAD HIM! YOU HAD NO BUSINESS--
OKAY: RULE NUMBER ONE. NO ONE TELLS ME MY BUSINESS.
RULE NUMBER TWO: SEE RULE NUMBER ONE.
THIS NULLIFIER WILL KEEP HIM MANAGEABLE FOR THE TIME BEING.
THANKS FOR GETTING HIM OUT OF MY FACE.
NO PROBLEM.
NICER SKIN TONE, BY THE WAY.
SUITS YOU.
THANKS.

WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO WITH 'IM?
I HATE TO SAY IT, BUT PROBABLY THE BEST PERSON TO TURN HIM OVER TO WOULD BE TONY STARK--
AND IF TONY STARK IS A SKRULL IMPOSTER?
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS, J, ISN'T THAT RIDICU--?
OH GOD.
OH MY FREAKING GOD.
SO WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO--
I DON'T KNOW. I'LL FIGURE IT OUT. SHUT UP.
FINE, FINE.
WOULD EXPLAIN A LOT, WOULDN'T IT.
OH MY GOD.
THE REGISTRATION ACT...EXILING YOUR BROTHER, DEPOWERING YOU...ALL OF IT...JUST TO PUT HIM IN A POSITION OF STRENGTH.
NOW THERE GOES SOMEONE WITH SERIOUS TRUST ISSUES.
AND SHE-HULK...
NEXT TIME, HOW ABOUT YOU JUST TELL US WHAT'S GOING ON?
EVEN BETTER: NEXT TIME, JUST STAY THE HELL OUT OF MY WAY.

Scans by Zone